

## Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW IMMEDIATE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: UR, US

SUBJECT: WHITNEY/PIPER CASE

REF: MOSCOW 19670

FOLLOWING IS COMPLETE TEXT OF WALLACH ARTICLE IN BOSTON  
HERALD:

BEGIN TEXT. THE UNITED STATES HAS WARNED THE SOVIET UNION  
THAT ITS OFFICIAL TASS NEWS AGENCY OFFICE IN SAN FRANCISCO  
IS "AT PERIL" AND "SUGGESTED IT WOULD BE A GOOD IDEA" FOR  
MOSCOW TO CONSIDER CLOSING IT, STATE DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN  
HODDING CARTER III SAID TODAY.

THE WARNING AMOUNTS TO SOMETHING LESS THAN AN EXPLICIT ORDER  
TO CLOSE THE TWO-MAN NEWS BUREAU, OFFICIALS HERE SAID. BUT  
THE SOVIETS NONETHELESS APPEAR TO BE DISREGARDING WHAT CAR-  
TER CALLED "A FAIRLY UNSUBTLE WARNING." MOSCOW MAINTAINS  
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THREE TASS BUREAUS--IN NEW YORK, WASHINGTON, AND SAN  
FRANCISCO.

"UE HAVE SUGGESTED THAT ONE (IN SAN FRANCISCO) WAS AT PERIL,"  
CARTER SAID. HE EXPLAINED THE ACTION WAS CONTEMPLATED TO  
PROTEST BOTH THE RECENT ARREST AND CONVICTION OF TWO AMERI-  
CAN NEWSMEN AND THE SOVIET CLOSING OF A UPI OFFICE IN

LENINGRAD.

ALTHOUGH UPI VOLUNTARILY WITHDREW ITS CORRESPONDENT FROM LENINGRAD, CARTER SAID THE AMERICAN NEWS AGENCY ONLY DID SO AFTER IT WAS "FAIRLY WELL HARASSED." THAT LEFT AMERICAN CORRESPONDENTS ACCREDITED ONLY TO MOSCOW WHILE THEIR SOVIET COUNTERPARTS REPORT FROM THREE CITIES HERE.

SOVIET EMBASSY OFFICIALS HOWEVER SAID THEY CONSIDER THE CASE OF THE TWO AMERICANS--CRAIG WHITNEY OF THE NEW YORK TIMES AND HAROLD PIPER OF THE BALTIMORE SUN--TO BE "CLOSED", FOLLOWING PAYMENT OF FINES BY THE TWO PAPERS AND PUBLICATION OF BOTH OF THE SOVIET JUDGE'S VERBATIM CHARGES AGAINST THEM.

ALTHOUGH THIS DID NOT AMOUNT TO THE "RETRACTION" MOSCOW WAS SEEKING OF THE STORIES WRITTEN BY WHITNEY AND PIPER, THE SOVIETS SAID THEY WERE SATISFIED WITH THE OUTCOME. THEY EXPLAINED THAT SINCE NEITHER AMERICAN WAS EXPELLED, THEY DID NOT EXPECT ANY FURTHER ACTION AGAINST SOVIET NEWSMEN HERE.

CARTER SAID HOWEVER THAT THE MATTER WAS FAR FROM CLOSED. "THERE ARE STILL OPTIONS," HE EXPLAINED. "ALL THESE THINGS ARE RATHER GRADUATED.' WE HAVE DISCUSSED THIS OFFICE WITH THEM AND SUGGESTED IT MIGHT BE A GOOD IDEA FOR THEM TO UNCLASSIFIED

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CONSIDER CLOSING IT."

THERE ARE TWO TASS CORRESPONDENTS IN SAN FRANCISCO--VITALIY SCHUKSEEV, 45, WHO HAS BEEN THERE FOR 18 MONTHS, AND BORIS YUZHIM, 36, WHO JOINED THE BUREAU IN EARLY JULY. THE TASS OFFICE IS LOCATED AT FOX PLAZA, NEXT TO THE UPI BUREAU.

PRESIDENT CARTER LAST MONTH CANCELED THE PROPOSED SALE OF A \$22 MILLION SPERRY UNIVAC COMPUTER TO TASS, WHICH THE SOVIET NEWS AGENCY WANTED TO USE IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE 1980 OLYMPICS. CARTER ALSO HAS ASKED EUROPEAN AND JAPANESE ALLIES TO DENY MOSCOW THE SOPHISTICATED COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY.

END TEXT.

FOLLOWING IS Q AND A FROM AUG 17 NOON PRESS BRIEFING RE ABOVE.

Q. HODDING, CAN YOU TAKE ALL THE AMBIGUITY OUT OF WHAT EVERYBODY IS SAYING ABOUT THE TASS OFFICE IN SAN FRANCISCO? CAN YOU MAKE IT NICE AND CLEAN AND EASY TO UNDERSTAND?

A. THE FIRST THING YOU SHOULD UNDERSTAND IS THAT THE STORY, WHILE IT APPEARS CURRENT, IS SOMETHING OVER 30 DAYS OLD. THAT'S THE FIRST THING. THE SECOND THING IS THAT WHAT WAS INVOLVED WAS SIMPLY A DISCUSSION OF THE OPERATION OF THE OFFICE IN SAN FRANCISCO. THERE WAS NO REQUEST TO CLOSE IT DOWN, AND THAT IS THE CURRENT POSITION. BUT THAT, I REPEAT, IS OVER 30 DAYS AGO. IT WAS IN THE CONTEXT, IF YOU RECALL, OF A NUMBER OF CONVERSATIONS THAT WERE HELD AT THE TIME.

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